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May/June 2011

American Girl

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say the right thing

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Volume 19, Number 3

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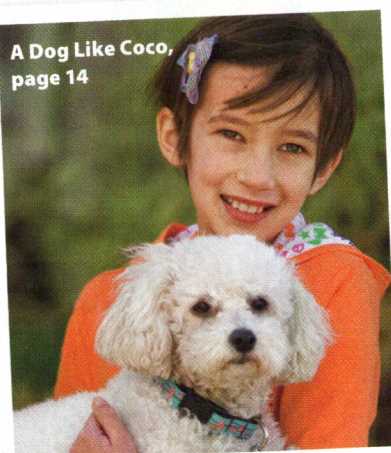
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Girls

E X P R E S S

Desk Set

Turn your artwork into a personalized gift for Mother's Day or Father's Day.

1. Scan your **artwork** into your computer. If you don't have a scanner, ask a parent to take you to a copy shop to have the art scanned.

2. Follow the instructions on a pack of **blank address labels** for inkjet printers—ask a parent for help if needed. Personalize labels using your artwork.

3. Follow printing directions on a pack of **blank sticker paper** to create stickers from your art. (You may need to cut them out.) Decorate blank note cards and envelopes with the stickers.

4. Create a large label from the sticker paper, and use it to decorate a **blank notebook**.

5. Tie up your creations with colorful yarn, or decorate a neat storage box. Deliver with a smile!

Meet an AG Reader

Rachel G.
Age 9, New York



I live with my mom and dad and my cat, Charlotte.

One thing most people wouldn't guess about me: I'm LOUD, and I like telling jokes.

My proudest day: I was at gymnastics. After months and months of practicing, I finally did a back handspring!

My favorite funny word is ruckus. It means "noisy commotion".

My dream birthday party would be a pool party. My birthday is in January, so it's always *waaay* too cold for a pool party then. So that would be my dream.

The time I most wanted to disappear: When I broke my mom's vase in the dining room. Yikes.

In 20 years, I'll be singing in concerts.



Introduce Yourself!

To find out how you could be a featured reader, go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun."

Shining Star



Ashlee S. knows what it's like to lose everything. A fire destroyed her house when she was little, taking all of her toys along with it. When her firefighter dad went out to battle a huge wildfire, Ashlee knew that kids in the path of the fire would soon face a difficult time. And she knew that she wanted to help.

Ashlee set to work. She organized a toy drive by handing out fliers and talking to radio stations. Donations poured in, and soon Ashlee went out to deliver tons of toys. "There was one girl who wouldn't look at me," recalls Ashlee, 12. "I gave her a puzzle, and her eyes just lit up. The mom cried and said that a

puzzle had been the little girl's favorite, but it was destroyed in the fire. Giving that girl a puzzle she loved gave me the warmest feeling in my heart."

After that first fire, Ashlee didn't stop collecting toys. Two years later, she has given away more than 150,000 toys. "I want to keep going and going," the Nevada girl says. What's next on her list? To get a big tour bus that she can use to travel around the country—to every state and every city, she says—giving toys and smiles to any kids who need them.

You can shine, too.

If you hear about a local family losing its home in a fire, ask your teacher if you can organize a class toy drive. A few toys could make life nicer for the kids in that family.



Tons of toys, all packed up and ready to go. Yippee!

Math Magic

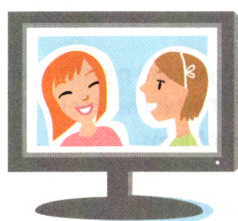
Watch the amazement add up when you perform this cool trick!

1. Tell a friend that you can predict the number she'll get after she does a series of math problems.
2. Pretend to think hard for a moment, and then write the number 3 on a piece of paper.
3. Give your friend the pencil and another piece of paper. Ask her to choose any number between 1 and 20 and write it on the paper.
4. Ask her to do this:
 - * Double her number (multiply by 2).
 - * Add 6.
 - * Divide in half.
 - * Subtract her original number from the new number.
5. Open your piece of paper and announce dramatically, "Three is your magic number!" If your friend's math is correct, this trick works with any number.



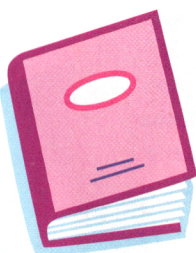
What's the Scoop?

Which ice cream flavor matches your personality?
Answer these questions to find out!



- 1.** Which of these TV shows would you want to star in?
- a. A detective drama
 - b. A dance competition
 - c. A sitcom about a friendly family

- 2.** If you wrote a book about your life, what would it be called?
- a. *Play to Win*
 - b. *Life of the Party*
 - c. *Home Sweet Home*



- 3.** Which award would you most like to win?
- a. Most Valuable Player
 - b. Best New Pop Star
 - c. Teacher of the Year

- 4.** Which superhero would you be?
- a. Super Solver—she saves the day with her strength, speed, and smarts.
 - b. Galactic Giggler—her spellbinding laugh chases evil away, and bad guys flee when she comes to play.
 - c. Fantastic Fairy-Angel—she's always close by and knows exactly how to help in every situation.



- 5.** If an article about you appeared in the newspaper, what would its headline most likely be?
- a. Local Girl Is NASA's New Space Shuttle Pilot
 - b. Queen of Comedy Coming to Town
 - c. President Honors Hometown Hero for Volunteerism

Mostly a's

Peppermint Pop

You're a smart, practical girl who's willing to work hard and compete. Fresh!

Mostly b's

Bubblegum Bop

You're a fun-loving girl who likes laughing and performing. Sweet!

Mostly c's

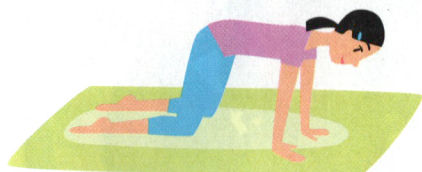
Chocolate Craving

You're a kindhearted girl who treasures family and friends. Rich!

Good Dog!

Here's how to do yoga's Downward-Facing Dog pose.

1. Start by kneeling on all fours.



3. Let your head hang down. Look at your belly button, and take five deep breaths.



2. Curl your toes under. Lift your hips high and extend your arms. Your palms should stay flat on the floor.




4. Come down by lowering your knees back to the floor. Arf!

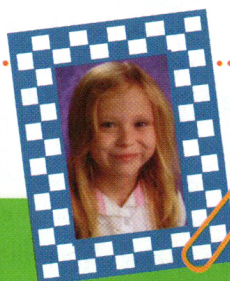


Reader Recipe

Tropical Smoothie

 Put 1 cup orange juice, 1 banana, ½ cup frozen peach slices, and ½ cup frozen strawberry slices into a blender. Ask an adult to help you blend until smooth. Pour into two glasses, and garnish with slices of fresh fruit.

Send your yummy—and easy—recipes to the address on page 7.



Jade H.
Age 9, North Carolina

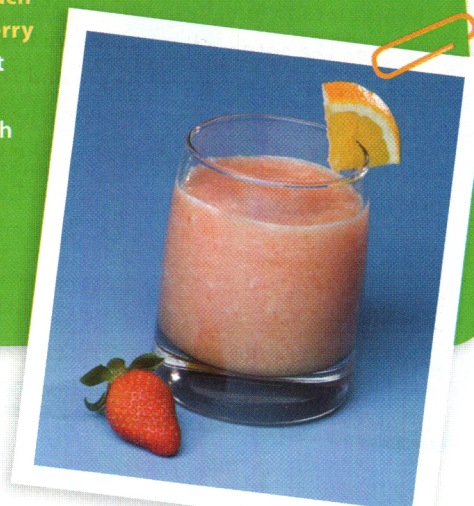
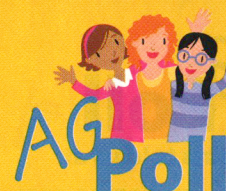


Photo: Radlund Photography

Creative Corner Lovely Light



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.



Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

What superpower would you most like to have? The ability to

- * transform yourself
- * fly
- * be invisible
- * go back in time

What's the best place to hide a diary?

- * in a dresser drawer
- * under a mattress
- * in a closet
- * disguised on a bookshelf

Lovely Light

Measure around a **push light** (found at home-supply stores), and then measure and cut **colorful paper** to fit around the light. Make it long enough so that the paper overlaps slightly when you wrap it around the light. Lay the paper shade flat, and use **double-stick tape** to attach cut-paper shapes to it. Bend the shade around the push light and **tape** it closed. Shine on!

Photo: Radlund Photography

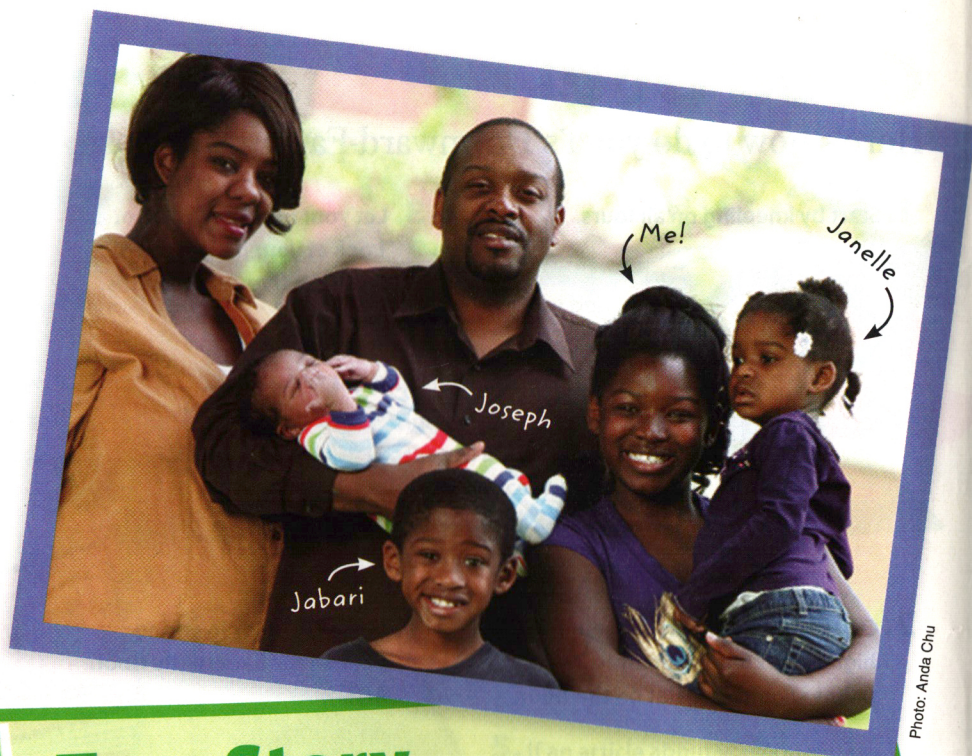


Photo: Anda Chu

AG Poll

What girls told us at
americangirlmagazine.com



Girls want to be able to ...

33%
be invisible.

26%
fly.

24%
go back in time.

17%
transform themselves.

What's the best place to
hide a diary?

53%
under a mattress
13%
disguised on
a bookshelf

25%
in a drawer
9%
in a closet

To answer our weekly poll question,
go to americangirlmagazine.com
and click on "Fun for Girls."

True Story

The baby was coming, and it was up to
11-year-old Faith to help out.

Dear American Girl,

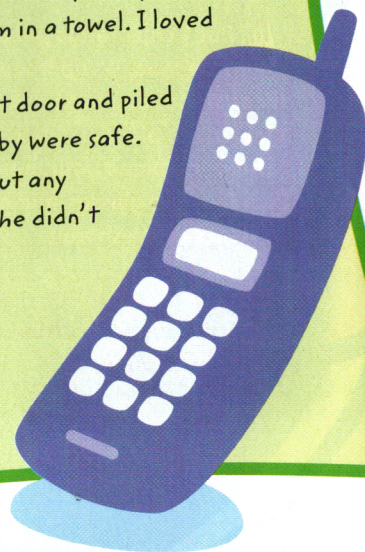
I'm the oldest kid in my family. That means I have a responsibility to help out. Last year, I got a crash course in staying calm during an emergency. My mom was pregnant with my baby brother, Joseph. My dad was at work when my mother yelled, "The baby is coming!"

My nine-year-old brother, Jabari, called 911. I got on the phone, and the operator told me what to do. It was hard to hear the operator with my mom yelling so much. I really wanted to scream, too, but I couldn't freak out. I had to keep everyone calm. After Joseph arrived, we wrapped him in a towel. I loved being close to him, but I was still scared.

Soon the paramedics banged on the front door and piled into our house to help. My mom and the baby were safe. Now I know I can problem solve in just about any situation. My mom was so proud. She said she didn't know what she'd have done without us.

Sincerely,

Faith S.
Age 11, California



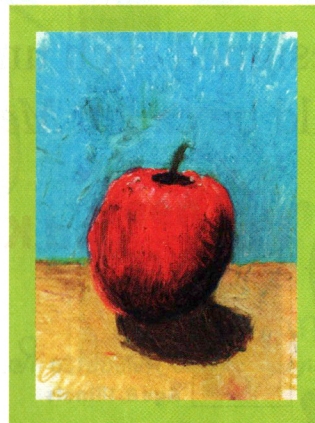
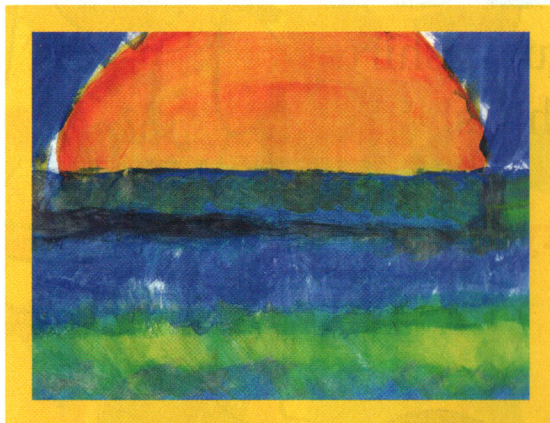
AG Art Gallery

Bye-bye, winter blues. Hello, spring turquoise and lime!

Help us fill our gallery! Send color copies of artwork or photos **created by YOU** to the address below. Sorry, we can't return entries.



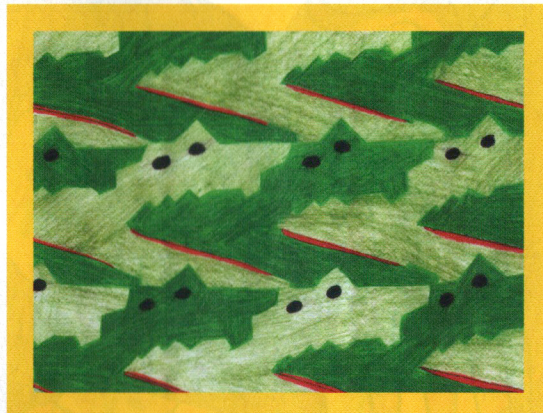
Caroline S.
Age 12, North Carolina



Sofia V.
Age 8, Kansas



Alina R.
Age 8, California



Cassidy W.
Age 14, Indiana

Write to Us

Be sure to include your

- * First and last name
- * Address and phone number
- * Birth date, including year
- * School photo or other portrait
- * Parent's signature

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! ★



Envelope art by
Ava B.
Age 11, Massachusetts

Sweet Tees

These girls designed such unique T-shirts that they should be called *Me*-shirts!

Puppy (and Kitty) Love



Annelise Ro.
Age 8, Illinois



Pretty in Pink



Hira M.
Age 11, Maryland

True Colors



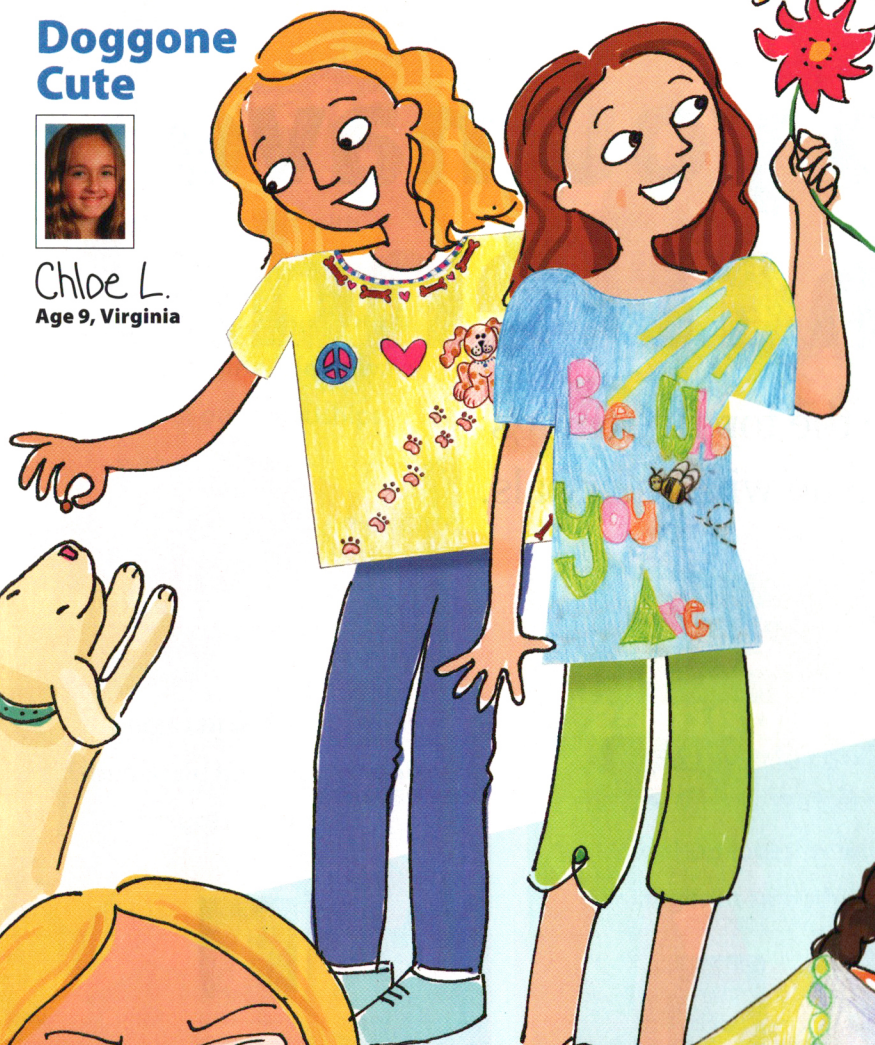
Claire G.
Age 12, Ohio



Doggone Cute



Chloe L.
Age 9, Virginia



Just Bee Yourself



Hannah D.
Age 11, California

Green Scene



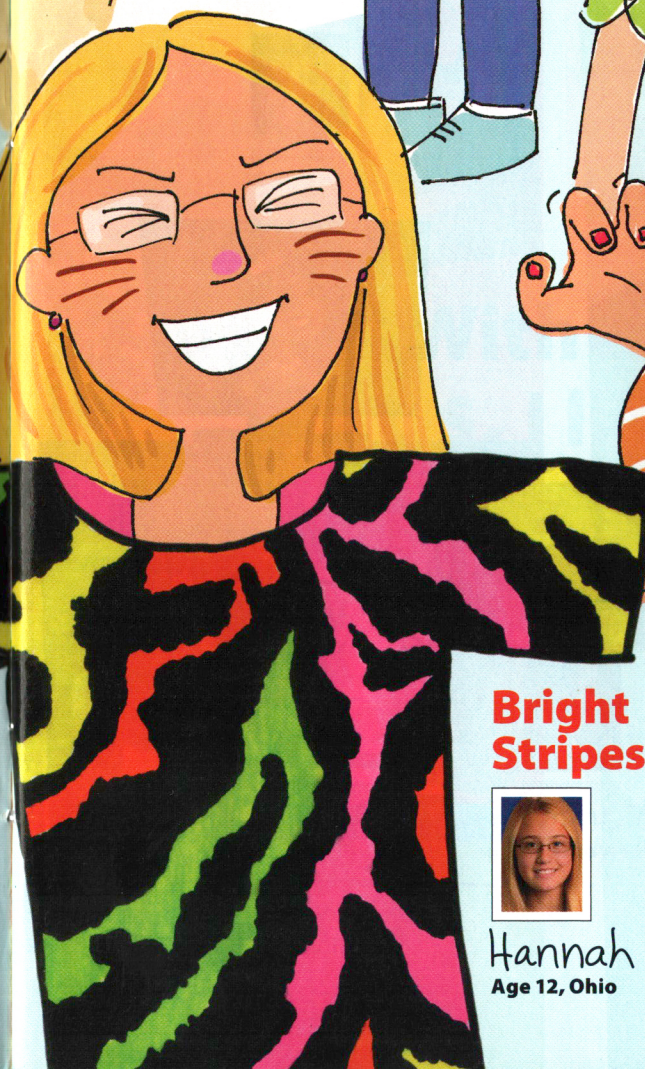
Reagan B.
Age 12, Maryland



Great Grins



Avery L.
Age 9, Illinois



Bright Stripes



Hannah H.
Age 12, Ohio



New Contest: Snow-less Globes

Design a snow globe—without the snow! Perhaps your "snow" globe would have sand that falls on a pretty beach scene, or maybe it would have glitter that looks like confetti being thrown at a birthday party. Send your drawing to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date.

Postmark deadline: June 10, 2011. Winners will appear in the November/December 2011 issue. Sorry—we can't return entries. ★

How do you have fun with friends?

These are the top five things girls love to do with their pals.

1. Have slumber parties

I like to have sleepovers with my friends. We have pillow fights, and we LOVE to eat popcorn with chocolate syrup drizzled on top.



Grace U.
Age 13, Florida

2. Play games



When my friends and I go swimming, we always have a blast racing each other in the pool and playing Marco Polo.



Deonna S.
Age 13, Ohio

3. Watch movies

My friends and I really like to watch old black-and-white movies together.



Anne W.
Age 11, Kentucky

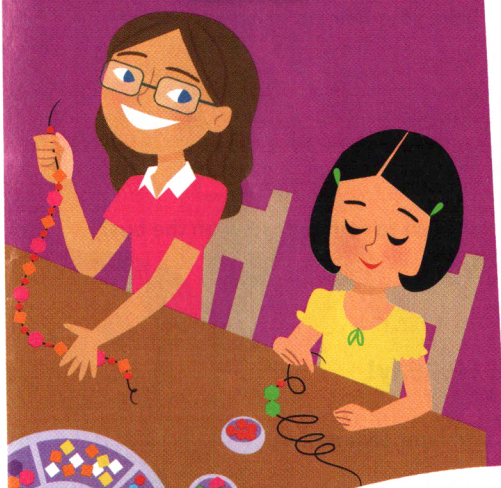


4. Make crafts

I love making crafts with my friends. When we're finished, we exchange them. Even though these are simple gifts, they always remind us of our friendships with each other.



Emily K.
Age 12, Ohio



5. Shop



It's fun to go to the mall with my friends. We like to window-shop together while drinking fruit smoothies.



Shaina C.
Age 13, New Jersey

With my buds, I like to...



...go roller-skating.



Kate Z.
Age 10, Illinois

...make up dances to our favorite songs.



Corinne P.
Age 9, Pennsylvania



...drink cold slushes on a hot summer day.



Sophie C.
Age 13, Maine

? Next question!

What is your favorite holiday food and why?

My mom's mashed potatoes are the best!

I love turkey—it's my favorite comfort food.

It's so much fun to decorate (and eat!) cookies with my family.

Send your answer to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, school or portrait-style photo, and birth date.

Postmark deadline:
June 10, 2011.

Some answers will appear in the November/December 2011 issue. ★

What's Your Daredevil Level?

Take this quiz to find out how daring you really are.

Would you...



eat a whole spicy pepper?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

ride a super-fast roller coaster?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

have your hair cut in a trendy style?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

introduce yourself to a movie star?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

write a poem and read it aloud in front of your class?

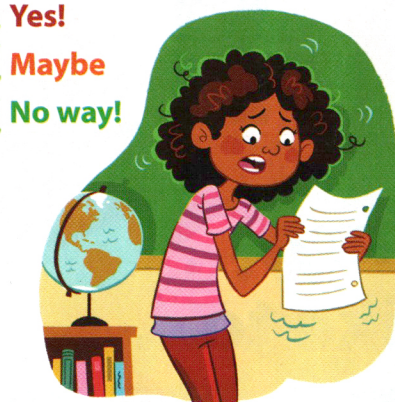
- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

sit next to someone new on the bus?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

hike to the top of a mountain?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

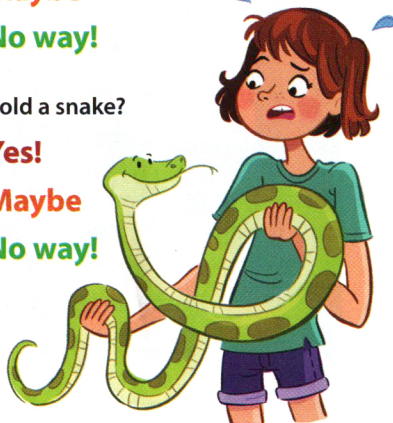


go bungee jumping?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

hold a snake?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**



go on a safari in Africa?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

ask to join a boys' kickball game?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**

join an after-school club in which you don't know anyone?

- Yes!**
- Maybe**
- No way!**



ADVENTURE METER



Mostly Red

Wow, you really are a girl who is game for anything! Everyone knows you for your fearless spirit. Put your courage to good use and continue to try new, exciting things. But remember—there's a difference between being daring and being foolish, so always be sure to dare with care.



Mostly Green

Doing adventurous things can make you a bit nervous. It's fine to want to feel safe, but you might be missing out on lots of cool experiences, such as meeting new friends or showing off one of your talents. Look inside and find your courage. It could be as simple as ordering for yourself in a restaurant, but who knows? That might lead to bungee jumping someday! ★

Mostly Orange

Sometimes you're brave, but at times, you choose to take a step back, and that's OK. It just means that you know your own comfort zone. You might not be jumping out of an airplane anytime soon, but that doesn't mean you won't eat a new food or try out for a team at school.



Me and my beloved Coco



Coco A Dog Like

Medicine cured Allison's cancer, but it was a dog that brought happiness back to her life. That's when she decided that other sick kids should have dogs, too.

I was feeling really horrible the day I met my dog, Coco. That wasn't unusual, though—I felt really horrible most of the time back then.

When I was in first grade, doctors found a tumor in my head. It was cancer, and it changed my life. After an operation, I spent a whole year getting treatment. The terrible medicine that fought the cancer made my stomach hurt and my body tired. When I found out about a program in my state that trains dogs to be friends for people, I pretty much begged my parents to let me have a dog. They knew it had been a tough year for me—after all, it had been a tough year for all of us, with me being so sick—and they said yes. I was really happy, but I didn't realize that my life was about to change again.

My family and I went to visit a few dogs to see if any seemed right for us. We went outside to play with them, but I knew right away that there was something magical about one fluffy white dog. Instead of running around and playing like the other dogs, Coco just wanted to sit with me in the



Here I am with my sister, Emily, our parents, and our dogs, Moon and Coco.

grass. Since I felt so sick, that was all I wanted to do that day. Coco seemed to sense it. Right then, I started to feel better. Nothing in that whole bad year had made me feel better the way Coco did sitting next to me. I knew she was the right dog, and she came home with us. She'd had some big changes that year, too, and leaving the prison with us that day was one of them.



Jack and his newly adopted dog, Cassie—my project's 10th adoption! These two were friends from the start, just like me and Coco.



See, the dog-training program where we got Coco wasn't like a normal animal shelter. Actually, it's at a women's prison in my town. Dogs that have been abandoned or abused are rescued and taken to the jail, where some of the prisoners train the dogs to be friendly and gentle and to obey some simple commands. It's a nice thing for everybody. The homeless dogs get a chance to go to loving homes. The women in prison get to do something good for the community and to learn job skills that might help them when they get out. And people like me get great dogs to cheer them up when they need it most.

It felt happier at my house with Coco there. She'd spend afternoons cuddling with me in a big, comfy chair. I didn't have to watch TV or read or anything. I just sat there with my sweet dog in my lap, resting and letting my body heal. Coco was always there for

me, and I rewarded her with belly rubs and lots of attention. My treatment had ended. My health was getting better every day, and with Coco's friendship, I actually started feeling good again. That was when I realized that I wanted to help someone else get a dog like Coco. I figured that if I could do that, another kid with cancer could start to feel better, too.

**I got to go to the adoption,
and it felt so good to watch
another kid get a dog.**



—Allison

I needed a way to raise enough money for the adoption fee—\$450 for one trained dog. At a summer camp, I had

learned a safe and all-natural recipe for homemade dog biscuits, and we'd baked some and sold them at a camp bake sale. I decided that I would do that as a fund-raising project. I started baking biscuits a few days a week and selling them at a stand in my neighborhood. Sales were slow at first, but whenever people stopped to ask what I was doing, they liked my idea and wanted to help out. One man—a friend



My sister, Emily, and I gave going-home presents to Jack and Cassie.



Coco and me cuddling—our favorite thing to do

of my dad's—even stopped by and gave me a hundred-dollar bill for my project!

After a summer of sales, we had enough money to pay for an adoption. The social worker at the children's hospital helped us to find a family that wanted a dog. Our first adopted dog went to the family of a two-year-old girl named Krysta, who had lost most of her eyesight when she got cancer. She picked out her dog—a black Lab named Lucky Bug—by resting her forehead on the dog's coat. She couldn't see the dog, but she could get to know him by touching and smelling him. I got to go to the adoption, and it felt so good to watch another kid get a dog. I knew in my heart that Lucky Bug would help Krysta and her family the way Coco had helped me.

In the meantime, friends and neighbors were baking biscuits to help me keep up with the demand. Also, a newspaper did a story about my project, and a group that supports good deeds chose my biscuit project to receive some money. I couldn't believe it when that group sent me a check for \$10,000! All of the money went right into

my project. A neighbor offered to let us bake in the big kitchen at his business, which meant that we could make thousands of biscuits in an afternoon—far more than we'd been able to do at home. Instead of just being sold at my little stand, my biscuits are now available online and in several different stores and vets' offices around my town. I've raised enough money to pay for more than a dozen dog adoptions and a bag full of going-home gifts for every dog.

Today, I'm healthy and happy and about to turn 11. I survived cancer, and I want to do everything I can to help other kids like me. I want to start raising money for cancer research. I want to do more to help the siblings of kids with cancer—like my own sister, Emily, who was only 4 when we found out I was sick and couldn't understand a lot of what was happening. And I want to make sure that any family that would be comforted by a dog can have one. Medicine cured me, but it was as if Coco gave me back my life. I want every other kid with cancer to be able to feel that way, too. ★

Mmm...Mmm.

slice and **Stack** this breakfast food to make an anytime treat!

1. Slice

Turn a muffin on its side on a cutting board. Use a butter knife to carefully slice the muffin into 2 or 3 layers.

2. Fill

Separate the layers. Spread a filling and scatter toppings on each layer.

3. Stack

Restack the layers. Finish off your muffin stack with extra toppings.

Choco-nana Cinnamon

For an ooey-goey treat, layer a **cinnamon muffin** with **chocolate-hazelnut spread** and **banana slices**.



Strawberry Bran

Want a good-for-you snack? Try a **bran muffin** with **strawberry cream cheese** and **fresh strawberries**.



..Muffins!

Sweet & Salty Cornbread

Try this sweet and savory combo for breakfast. Start with a **cornbread muffin**. Then add **maple syrup** and some **bite-size bacon pieces**.

Short-Stack Chocolate

Make a tiny dessert with a **mini double-chocolate muffin**, **vanilla yogurt**, and **fresh raspberries**.

Berry Blue Blueberry

Fill up on fruit with a **blueberry muffin**, **whipped cream cheese**, and **fresh blueberries**.



Try other muffin flavors and fillings (applesauce, jam, peanut butter, granola, nuts) to create your own muffin stack recipe! ★

Snappy Sign-offs

Sign your name with style anywhere that needs a note—yearbooks, scrapbooks, cards, and more!

Add a Border

Draw a border such as a pretty picture frame or speech balloon around your message.



Pen a Poem

Write a word poem using the letters in your friend's name.

Happy
Adventurous
Nice
Nitty (in a good way)
Awesome
Hungry!



Share a Sticker

Pick a sticker that says something about you (a soccer ball if you play soccer or a pawprint if you love animals). Use it after your signature.

Mia

Madison, I hope you have a
great summer! See you
next year!!!
Grace

Show Your Colors

Write your message with different colored pens to turn your note into a rainbow!



Amanda
Chloe
Taylor

Make a Face

Draw a face using some of the letters in your name.

Design a Doodle

Turn the first letter of your name into a doodle.

Class of

Roses r purple
Daisies r not
Ella's my friend
I'll miss her a lot

Fill in the Blank

Write this rhyme and put your friend's name in the blank.

Create a Logo

Design a logo using your name or initial.



Where to use
your sign-offs:

- * Photo frame mat
- * Autograph book
- * Friendship scrapbook
- * Pillowcase
- * Yearbook ★

Movie Night Sleepover

Invitation

Give your guests a popcorn preview! Start with a folded bag of unpopped microwave popcorn. Cut a piece of scrapbook paper so it's slightly shorter than the width of the popcorn bag. Wrap the paper around the bag and use tape to hold it in place. Cut popcorn shapes or circles out of white paper. Write party details on the shapes and glue to the front of the bag.

Come to a
Movie
Sleepover!

Where:
Kennedy's
When: June 24
6 pm


Star-Struck Slush



Slurp theater-style slushies! Put 2 cups seltzer water, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon unsweetened powdered drink mix (cherry flavor), $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar, and 3 cups ice cubes in a blender. Ask an adult to blend well. Pour into glasses and serve with fun straws.

Candy Commotion

Make ice cream sundaes using your favorite concession-stand candy for toppings—malted milk balls, chocolate-covered raisins, or gummy bears!



Invite your
friends to a
star-studded
slumber
party!

Poster Pizzazz

Before showtime, dream up your own movies and design their posters.

First, cover your work space. Then give each guest a piece of card stock. You will also need scissors, glue sticks, and a stack of old magazines (be sure to ask your parent's permission). Set a timer for 15 minutes. On "Lights, Camera, Action!" each girl has to create her own poster for her made-up movie using words and pictures cut out of the magazines. When time's up, hang up your posters in your movie-watching room.

Star for a Night

Before the party, write the names of your favorite actors on index cards (one name per card) and fold in half. Punch a hole in the corner of each card and tie to a pair of star-shaped sunglasses (available at party supply stores). As each guest arrives, she chooses a pair of sunglasses without reading the card. Tape the card to her back so that everyone else can read it. When the party starts, each girl tries to guess who she is by asking the other guests "yes" or "no" questions. (For example: "Do I sing in my movies?" or "Do I have blond hair?") The first person who can guess who she is wins a prize. Keep playing until everyone figures out their movie star names. Use your star names for the rest of the party!

Act It Out

Try one or more of these ideas while you watch your movie:

- * If you're watching a musical, sing and dance with your friends.
- * Hit mute and do all the talking for the actors. Make up your own lines!
- * Every time an actor says a certain word, like "cool," everyone takes a drink or eats popcorn.
- * Set a timer for 2 minutes. When time's up, pause the movie and try to remember all the lines. Act out the scene with your friends.
- * Halfway through the movie, hit pause and have an intermission. Let people refill snacks and take bathroom breaks.

Movie Bingo

Give each guest a bingo card and mini glow-in-the-dark plastic stars to use while you watch a movie together. The bingo card will list things or people that might be seen in a movie. When a player sees something in the movie that's listed on the card, she covers up that bingo square with a star. For example, if there's a square that says "horse," cover it up when you see a horse in the movie. The first person who covers five squares in a row wins a prize! For printable bingo cards to use at your party, visit americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun."





Party Popcorn

Shake things up and try a new popcorn recipe! Have a big bowl of plain popcorn and smaller bowls of other ingredients to mix in. Each girl chooses some mix-ins and puts them in a sealed gallon-size plastic bag with some popcorn. Then she shakes up her mixture and pours it into her own popcorn box.

Here are some mix-ins to try:

- * dried fruit
- * breakfast cereal
- * cinnamon sugar
- * candy sprinkles
- * hot cocoa mix

- * yogurt raisins
- * taco seasoning
- * powdered cheese
- * powdered ranch dressing mix
- * pretzels

Puttin' on the Glitz



Turn your house into a twinkling theater. Ask an adult to hang strings of white lights near the food table, and scatter glow-in-the-dark plastic stars on the tablecloth for extra glow. Add shine to paper cups and takeout-style boxes (available at party supply stores) with star stickers. Write your guests' names on tags with glow-in-the-dark paint and attach to the boxes. It will help them find their popcorn during the movie! ★

Umm...Uh...

(Exactly) What to Do and Say When You Freeze Up

by Patti Kelley Criswell

Do any of these situations sound familiar to you?

A bossy girl asks you a question, but you can't think of a single word to say.

You call your friend, and when the answering machine asks you to leave a message, you stutter out a non-answer.

Your teacher calls on you, and even though your brain knows the answer, your mouth won't say it.

You can never greet people first in the halls.

You decide not to buy a purse at a garage sale, because when you open your mouth to ask the clerk the price, nothing comes out.



When these moments happen to you, it's likely that your brain is flooding with nervous energy. Here's what to do:

1. First, breathe! Deep breaths tell the brain that you're not under stress, and that makes it easier for you to think.

2. Move your body. Shake off tension by moving your arms or legs.

3. Say anything. Here are some suggestions:

- "Uh . . ."
- "Just a minute . . ."
- "I'm thinking . . ."
- "Hold on . . ."
- "I forgot what I was going to say . . ."

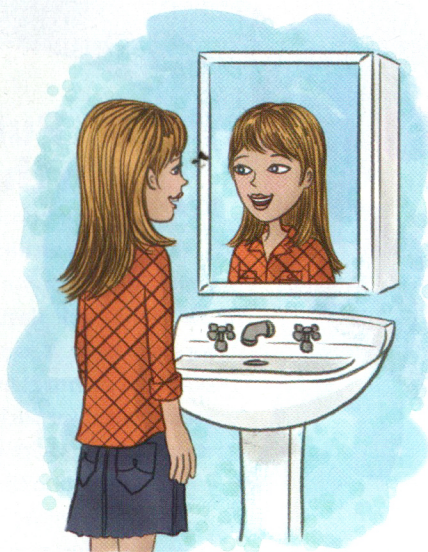
Practice these a lot with a parent or in the mirror. The more you repeat a response, the easier it'll be to pull out of your memory later.

4. Move your mouth.

Chew gum, drink water, or move your chin back and forth to help relax your facial muscles and jaw.

5. Keep breathing, and keep trying.

If you find your tension getting worse, ask your doctor for more suggestions.



The next step in un-freezing is figuring out the right words to use.

So Embarrassing!

Eventually, something will happen that will embarrass you—it happens to everybody. You'll trip, drop something, say the wrong thing, or find yourself in an awkward spot. If you draw

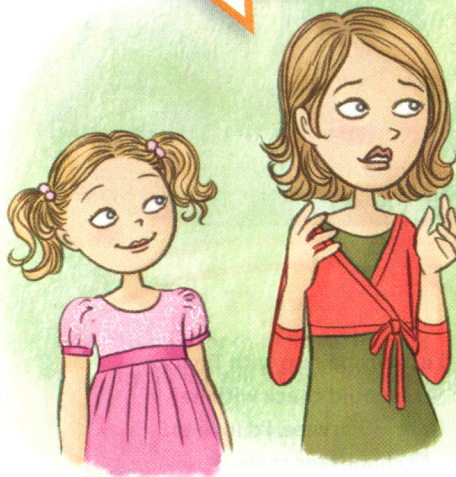
attention to the problem, people will notice (when probably no one would have noticed before!). So don't make a big deal about the situation, and most likely others won't, either.

Freeze!

If your little sister annoys you by following you and your friends around EVERYWHERE—but your friends think she's cute:

Thaw

"She is cute—and fun, too. But if we want privacy, I'll ask my mom for help."



Freeze!

If your friend's mom serves a food that you won't eat, and she's curious why you didn't touch it:

Thaw

"I filled up on the mashed potatoes. They were great!"

Freeze!

If you drop your lunch tray in the crowded cafeteria:

Thaw

(Smiling) "That floor was looking too clean. Fixed!"

Freeze!

If your mom snaps at your friends to "Go to sleep!" at your birthday party sleepover:

Thaw

"She's really tired and stressed. This party was a lot to put together. So let's settle down. See you in the a.m."



Freeze!

If you trip over a ball in gym class and end up on your behind:

Thaw

"Yeah, that was graceful."



Ouch, That Hurt!

Words are powerful—once you say them, you can't easily take them back. Is there a way to communicate honestly without being hurtful? You bet there is.

Freeze!

If you don't think your friend draws very well, but she asks you what you think of her art:

Thaw

"I like that you draw cats. I love cats!"

Freeze!

If a friend asks you if you think the band she likes is better than the band another friend likes:

Thaw

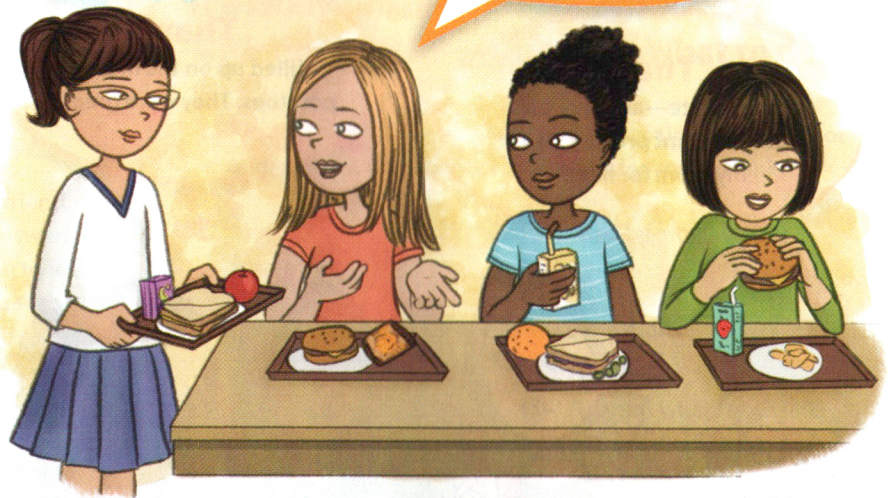
"You know, I think that a favorite band is a really personal choice, so that's all I'm going to say about that."

Freeze!

If a nice girl asks you to sit by her at lunch, but you'd rather stick with your best buds:

Thaw

"That's really nice! I'm happy where I am, but I appreciate the offer. Hey, would you like to join us?"

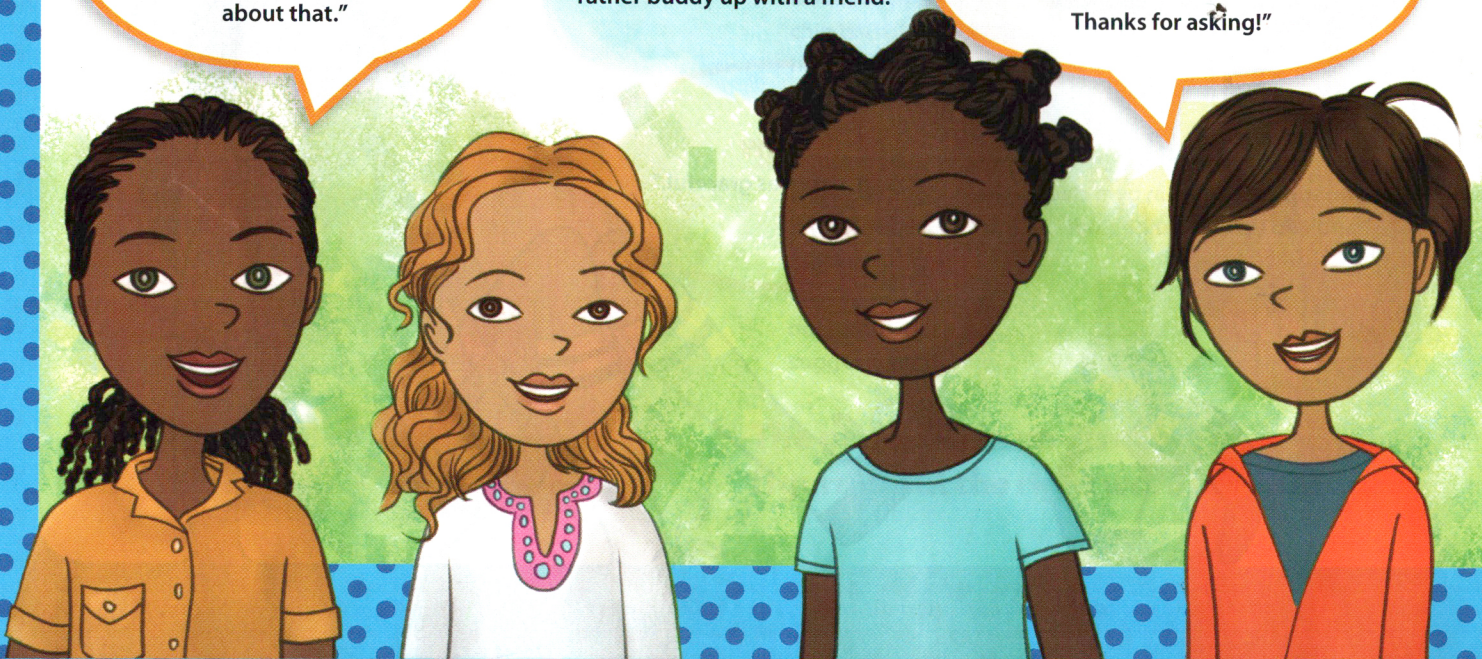


Freeze!

If a girl in class asks you to be her reading partner, but you'd rather buddy up with a friend:

Thaw

"I usually pair up with Taylor, so I should check with her first. Otherwise, I'd love to. Thanks for asking!"



I'm Gonna Say No

Speaking up isn't always easy—and saying no can be really hard. But you can say no in a kind way without explaining or saying a whole lot more.

Freeze!

If your teacher asks you to be in a spelling bee, but your knees are knocking just thinking about it:

Thaw

"I don't think I'm quite ready for that, but thanks for asking."

Freeze!

If your coach asks if you can play in the tournament next weekend, but you have plans:

Thaw

"Thanks for thinking of me, but my family will be out of town."



Freeze!

If your best friend asks you to try out for cheerleading with her, but you want to run for student council:

Thaw

"Being on a team with you would be fun! But student council is more my thing. Thanks, though."



Freeze!

If your friend wants to take your new MP3 player home for the night, but you don't want to loan it out:

Thaw

"I'm not comfortable with that, but do you want to listen to it in my room now?"

Bottom line? Knowing the right words can help you to un-freeze your tongue, to speak out with confidence and grace—and to handle almost any situation. Period. ★



More clever comebacks can be found in *A Smart Girl's Guide to Knowing What to Say*.

Venus, Tara, and the Big Game



by Teresa Cotsirilos



Venus Lozano was perfect. She was the prettiest girl in our school. Her history project on Iceland was so good that it was published in the local paper. She had enough friends to pack a baseball stadium. She could juggle a soccer ball on her knees and

her forehead for three minutes without letting the ball bounce. "What a sweet girl," the grown-ups always said. "Now, she is a girl who's going places."

Grown-ups. They never really know anything about anything. When Venus walked down the halls at school, she walked straight down the middle with her nose turned up, forcing younger kids to get out of her way. When Venus played soccer, she never passed unless she had to. When anyone asked her what her name was, she always gave a saucy toss of her pearly-shampoo-commercial hair and replied, "Venus Lozano. Yes, that's Venus, just like the goddess of love." Venus Lozano was the queen of The Popular Crowd, so, naturally, no one really liked her very much. But Venus was the star of our school soccer team, the Fat Chance Barracudas, so we put up with her.

Coach stopped putting up with her, however, two days before the Big Game.

The Big Game was bigger than the World Series, the Super Bowl, and the World Cup all globbed together. As far as any middle-school soccer player was concerned, the outcome of the Big Game could

Without their
star player,
the Fat Chance
Barracudas
can't possibly win.
Or can they?



create hurricanes, cause global warming, and change the course of our lives. Whoever won the Big Game was the champion middle-school girls' soccer team. Period.



The Fat Chance Barracudas had never made it to the Big Game before. Coach said that we'd made it this year because we were all very talented and knew how to work together. But we all knew that we'd gotten there because of perfect Venus.

All went well enough at practice that day, and we were feeling pretty good about the Big Game

until Venus told Coach that she couldn't come to the next practice.

I'd been packing up my gym bag and paused to listen. Coach raised her eyebrows at Venus. "Oh? And why might that be, chica?" Coach called everybody *chica*, which means "girl" in Spanish. I liked it, but it drove Venus crazy. That might be why I liked it so much.

Venus tossed her perfect hair and smiled sweetly. "My friend Aster invited me to her brother's school musical. Sorry," she said, but she wasn't.

Coach eyed her hawkishly. "Venus," she said, "you know the rules. You aren't allowed to miss more than four practices in a season. You've already missed four."

Venus laughed. "Yeah, but I already told my friends I'd go."

"Your teammates are your friends, too," Coach said. She paused and frowned at Venus. "Look," she said, "if your musical is more important to you than this team, hand in your uniform and go home."

"You don't mean that," Venus said quickly. "You need me on the Barracudas!"



"I don't need you any more than I need the other players," Coach said coolly.

Venus's cheeks flushed. "You know what would happen to this team if I wasn't on it!" she said.

Coach wrinkled her nose at Venus very faintly. "I think we'd get along, chica. Sorry."

Venus turned in her jersey. She went to the musical the next night.

I couldn't help being proud of Coach for what she'd said. It takes real guts to say, "Sorry, chica," to Venus Lozano, even if you're a tough-as-nails Guatemalan refugee like Coach. But, nevertheless, without Venus, the Big Game was as good as lost already.

We didn't know what the repercussions of our loss would be. Maybe the polar ice caps would melt. Maybe a tornado would rip through Chicago. Maybe it would hail across the country, and the hailstones would be bigger than basketballs.

At practice the next day, Coach told us not to

worry about it. "Venus is not our whole team," she said. "A team has lots of different people in it. We do not depend on Venus." Then she announced who Venus's replacement on offense would be. "Tara Mistry will take Venus's position," Coach said, and Tara shyly walked out of the locker room.

"I'm really glad to be here," Tara said. She said it so softly, we could barely hear her.

Tara Mistry was the only ten-year-old on the team. She was skinny and gangly with thick glasses, and she wore goggles over her glasses to keep them from breaking. She was less than four feet tall. This was her first year playing soccer. Ever.

"OK," Coach said, "let's practice. Here you go, Tara." She passed Tara the ball. Tara tripped over it and fell flat on her face.

It was a very, very long practice. We kept passing the ball to the right, expecting Venus to be there, to tear up the field and score without passing to any of us, and to make us love and hate her all at once.





Tara missed the ball. Every time.

"Everyone messes up sometimes," Coach said to her. "You nervous, chica?"

Tara's teeth chattered. She shakily adjusted her goggles. "Yeah."

Coach let her face slip into one of her rare smiles. "Loosen up. You're doing fine."

The practice lumbered on. I got the ball and flew up the field. Tara was cowering by the sideline.

Everyone had forgotten about her, so she was wide open. "Tara!" I shouted and kicked the ball her way. "Pass!"

Tara caught the ball with her hands.

The Fat Chance Barracudas were engulfed in silence. Tara turned the color of a ripe tomato. She looked as if she wanted to melt into the field. She dropped the ball and tried to kick it back to me.

Her aim was off, and I had to run to get it. "Sorry," Tara whimpered and nervously adjusted her goggles again. "That was stupid."

She did it again ten minutes later. "You're not allowed to use your hands in soccer," I told her, as kindly as I could.

"I know," she mumbled miserably. "I'm sorry!" Oh yes. We were toast.

It was dark when practice finally ended. My teammates trudged to the locker room with their shoulders hunched like defeated soldiers. "It's over," I heard one of the defenders whisper. "We've as good as lost the game already!"

"I'd rather have a jerk like Venus on the field than Tara," her friend agreed.

Coach heard this, and the wrinkles in her face somehow became more defined. Her eyes were



**"I'd rather have a jerk like Venus
on the field than Tara."**



clamped, her jaw was locked. I had never seen her so upset. "We'll work around her," I told her quietly.

Coach's brow furrowed even more. "Work around who?" she asked.

"Tara. Don't worry about it—I'll cover the right side of the field and the center of the field, and we'll make do."



Coach sighed and shook her head, annoyed. "If I played soccer that way, then I wouldn't have kicked Venus off the team," she said. "Everyone gets to play."

"But what about the Big Game?" I blurted out. "Who knows what could happen if we lose! The Earth could get hit by a meteor—that's how the dinosaurs went extinct, wasn't it?"

"This is a team sport," Coach said. She didn't deny the meteor thing, though. She was quiet for a moment. Then, slowly, she smiled. "I have a great idea," she said. She got up. "I have to go, chica. Do me a favor and find Tara, will you? I think she's crying in the bathroom." She walked away.

Tara wasn't in the bathroom. She was behind it, kneeling in the mud, crying quietly into her arms. I didn't really know what to do, because I'm always really bad at these kinds of things. I stood there and watched her for a while, waiting for her to

notice me and cursing Coach for leaving me to do this. Her "great idea" had better be worth it.

Tara looked up. She tried to force a grin, but it came out as a grimace instead. "I'm sorry," she muttered. She wiped her eyes. "I'm being stupid."

I awkwardly sat down next to her. "We're all nervous," I said. "It's OK."

"No, it's not!" Tara said. "I'm terrible! This is my first year playing soccer, and I stink like Brie cheese!" I opened my mouth to deny it, but Tara cut me off. "Oh, go on, say it! Lie and say I'm not that bad. That's what Coach has been doing all day!" She closed her eyes and swallowed. "I'm terrible. I just want to go home."

Now it was my turn to say something, and my mind went blank. What are you supposed to say to that when it's pretty much true? "Well," I said slowly, "what's the worst that can happen?"

Tara sniffed. "We lose," she said bitterly.

"So, that's not the end of the world, is it?" I said. "There are more important things than losing the Big Game. Like..." I tried to think. Soccer is everything to me, and the Big Game is what I live for. But I wasn't about to tell Tara that. "Like pizza," I said weakly. "Pizza's pretty important. And...and





“Venus is a total snob. You’re already better than she is.”



the team’s more important than the game. It’s just a game, right?”

“But it’s not just a game!” Tara wailed. “It’s the Big Game!”

“It’s still a game,” I said. “I mean, there are bigger things out there to worry about. Like...volcanoes. Volcanoes are bad news. Worry about volcanoes instead.” I sounded pretty dumb, and I knew it.

“But I’m never going to be as good as Venus!” Tara wailed.

“Venus,” I informed her, “is a total snob. You’re already better than she is.” We were quiet for a moment and sat and watched the field, listening to the wind whistling through the goal nets.

“Pizza’s more important,” Tara mumbled finally.

I grinned. “That’s the spirit.” I helped her up and we walked home.

The Big Game came. We were playing the Santa Guadalupe Bobcats, who had won the Big Game three years in a row. Coach announced that Tara was going to be goalie. I couldn’t believe we’d have someone like Tara Mistry between our goal and the Bobcats, especially when she’d never played goalie before. “Coach,” I muttered when I was able to catch her alone, “I don’t think Tara’s over four feet tall.”

“Of course she is,” Coach said smoothly. “She’s four foot three.”

“Coach, I’m serious. How’s she going to block the ball if someone shoots it in the upper corners

of the goal? She’s like a munchkin—”

“You have something against short people, chica?” Her voice grew sharp. I blushed, muttering an apology. Coach is a bit vertically challenged herself.

The bleachers were packed with parents and fans, and there was Venus Lozano, propped up against the water fountains, glaring at us as we warmed up. “She’s going to laugh like a hyena when I screw up,” Tara said hollowly, staring bleakly at Venus. Venus glared back. “She is, isn’t she? She’s going to talk about me at school.” This, unfortunately, was very true.

“Pizza’s more important,” I reminded her. Tara hyperventilated and shivered visibly, nervously adjusted her goggles, and fidgeted with the sweaty yellow goalie’s shirt she wore. I wanted to tell her it was gonna be OK, but it probably wasn’t, and I don’t like to lie. Then the ref blew the whistle. The game was on.

It was amazing how quickly the Bobcats tore down the field. They had a girl with the number 34 on the back of her jersey, and I immediately saw that she was a lot like Venus—her team passed her the ball, and she dribbled all the way up the field by herself. Within the first five minutes, Number 34 kicked the ball directly at the goal and it rocketed toward the upper left corner. Tara jumped—and caught it. The crowd went wild, but we all just stared at her.

“How’d you do that?” I demanded.

Tara’s eyes were very round. She adjusted her



glasses again. "I...I don't know."

"What do you mean you don't know? You just jumped like some sort of grasshopper. I've played soccer for three years and can't do that!"

"Did I mess up again?" she asked anxiously. "I did, didn't I?"

"Tara!" Coach hollered from the sidelines. She gave her a big thumbs-up. "Yeah, chica! Chicaaaa!"

I glanced at Venus. She looked as if she was sucking on a warhead candy.

The Big Game carried on. Tara jumped, dove, pounced, and fell, and the ball never got past her. Then we scored. "Arriba, arriba, chicas!" Coach screamed, and she was jumping up and down. I looked over at the water fountains to shoot a nasty grin at Venus, but she'd left.

With only one minute left in the game, Number 34 had the ball. She kicked. The ball soared, and there was no way to stop it. The crowd screamed. Tara leaped again.

Tara hit her nose against the goalpost when she

fell, and it bled down the front of her jersey in waterfalls. She scraped her cheek and bruised the entire right side of her body. She slid so deeply into the mud and soggy grass that she swallowed a mouthful of it, and later she actually begged Coach to wash her mouth out with soap. She broke her glasses. And her goggles.

The ball was curled in her arms.

The ref blew the whistle. The Big Game was over, and the Fat Chance Barracudas exploded.



"Yes!" Coach leaped into the air. "Yes! Yes!"

We ran screaming to Tara, and we hugged her enthusiastically all at once, falling in one big heap on top of her. She bled all over us, but we didn't care. Coach cried. Tara wiped her bloody nose on her sleeve and grinned at me.

"There is no way that pizza's more important than this," she said.

The pizza was still pretty good, though, at the party we had afterward. Coach took us to her place, a slanted one-story house with an endless number of cats. She got Tara cleaned up and gave her some new clothes. They were about ten sizes too big, of course, since Tara's so tiny. Then Coach told us all how proud she was and handed out the medals we'd won. They were chipped and plastic and said "Made in China" on the back, but that didn't matter to any of us.

At exactly 4:37 P.M., the doorbell rang. I opened the door. There stood Venus Lozano. She was holding a big pink box. "I brought cookies," she said.

I bit my lip. "You weren't invited," I said. I knew it was rude as soon as I'd said it, but I didn't really know if I cared.

"I know," said Venus. She looked down, shuffling her feet in place. "Congratulations," she said quietly, eyeing the medal around my neck.

"Who's there?" asked Tara. She saw Venus and the bottom of her smile fell out. Venus cleared her throat and shoved the cookie box into my hands.

Then she turned and trudged down the steps as we watched her go.

"Hey! Chica!" We turned around. So did Venus. Coach was standing behind us. "You can stay," she said to Venus.

"Really?" Venus asked.

"Really?" Tara and I asked and looked at Coach like she was crazy.

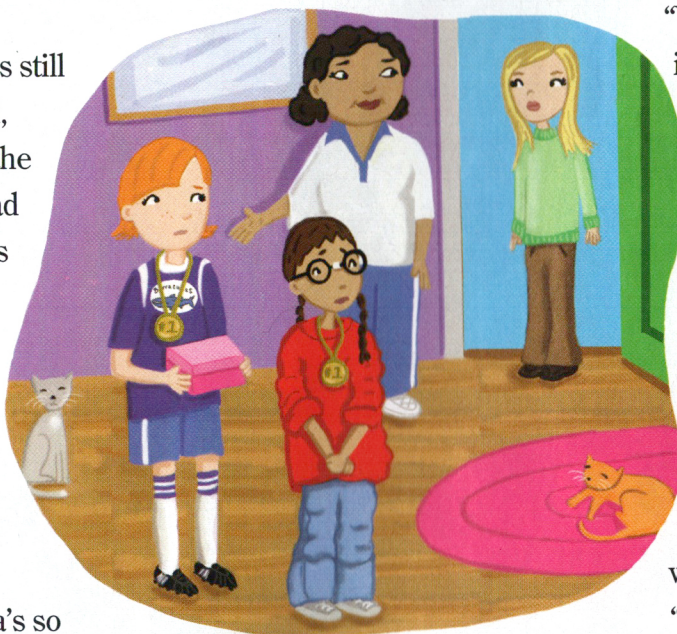
"Yeah," Coach said. "Come on in. We won't mind. Well, yeah, we will, but we'll get over it. I got too many pizzas and need some help finishing them off—I don't want any leftovers."

"Hope the musical was good enough to miss the Big Game for," I said stiffly.

Venus grinned weakly. "Terrible, actually. Total waste of time."

"Come on," Coach said, "the team's waiting."

Venus looked apprehensively at Tara. "Sure," Tara said, "come on in." And we walked into Coach's living room together. ★



Meet the Author



Teresa Cotsirilos

When Teresa was 12 years old, she won *American Girl* magazine's short story contest—twice! Ten years later, she's graduated from college and is pursuing a career in writing. But she still hangs out and eats pizza with her teammates from her old soccer team—and she keeps in touch with her coach!



Rock the House

Send your dolls into stardom!

Movable Microphone

For a stand, wrap a **thread spool** in **silver duct tape**. Connect **two silver pencils** together end to end with the same tape. Push one end of the pencil pole into the spool hole, and slip a **marker cap** on the other end for a mic.

Electric Keyboard

Use **double-stick tape** to attach **glittery paper** to the outside of a **shoebox lid**. Visit americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun" to print a **keyboard**. Tape the keyboard to the lid. For each

leg, tape **hard candy rolls** together end to end. Wrap the rolls in **plain paper**, and tape them closed. Slip **bottle caps** on the top and bottom of each leg. Balance the piano over the legs.

Guitar & Amplifier

Draw a guitar body, neck, and face on the back of **glittery paper**. Cut out the pieces, and attach them as shown below with **Glue Dots**. Use Glue Dots to add **beads** for control knobs, **sequins** for tuning pegs, and **ribbon** for a strap. Press **self-adhesive gems** to the strap, and draw

strings on the guitar face with a **marker**. For an amp, use **double-stick tape** to attach glittery paper to the outside of a **small box**. Use Glue Dots to attach **plain paper** circles to the box and to attach a **black cord** from the guitar to the amp.



Drum Set

For each drum, slip **glittery paper** inside a **plastic treat canister**. Attach a **shiny paper** circle to the canister bottom with a **Glue Dot**. For legs, wrap a **rubber band** around **three pencils**. Stand the pencils on the erasers, and place a Glue Dot on each top. Slip the

canister over the pencil tops. For each cymbal, slip the eraser end of a **pencil** into a **thread spool** hole, and attach a canister lid to the other end with a Glue Dot. Cut a **straw** into pieces for drumsticks. ★



Puzzle Palooza

Up, Up, and Away!

Which colored blocks form the longest one-color path on the balloon?
You can count up, down, or across for the path, without counting any block twice.



Sky Writing

Unscramble the letters to discover the words. You might see these things if you look up at the sky.

tekin

(t) (e) (k) (i)

duoc

(l) (d) (u) (o) (c)

wrabion

(w) (r) (a) (b) (i) (o) (n)

Want to be an AG Puzzle Pal?

Send puzzles, secret codes, or brainteasers created by **YOU** to the address on page 7.

This puzzle idea was inspired by this issue's Puzzle Pal.



Amanda W.
Age 10, Massachusetts

Birds of a Feather

This bird is searching for her twin in this flock. Can you help her find her match?



Where is my twin?

Photo Fun

Sophia G., age 10, of Minnesota took this pretty picture of a butterfly. To find out what type of butterfly this is, cross off any letter on the frame that you see on the list below.

Some letters will repeat. Fill in the blanks with the leftover letters, reading clockwise from bottom left to bottom right.

Letter List:

C	Q	R	E	U
B	G	V	D	F
H	K	M	P	J



Name: _____

Send your fun photos to the address on page 7.

This issue's Buzzword is... **celestial**.

The word "celestial" is hidden in this word search six times. Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the word.

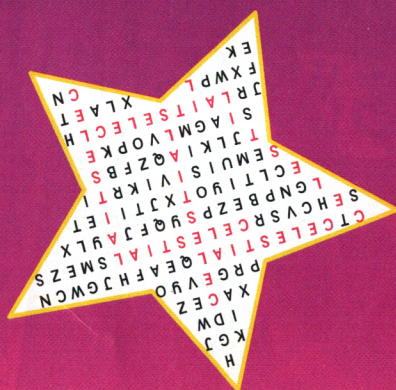
How to say it:
suh-LES-chul

What it means:
describes something
that can be seen
in the sky

One way to use it:
In the night sky, Ella and
Grace saw many celestial
objects, such as
constellations and
shooting stars.



Answer Box



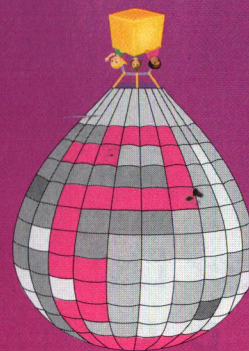
Buzzword
Photo Fun
SWALLOWTAIL



Birds of a Feather

Sky Writing

rainbow
cloud
kite



Up, Up, and Away!



 **Posters** Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters. ★

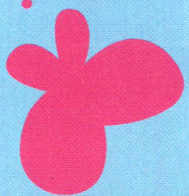
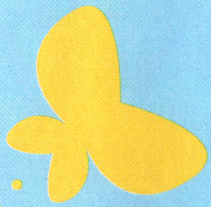
Chase your



dreams!

Photo: Adam Jones/Visuals Unlimited, Inc./Getty Images

Hello, spring!



★ American Girl[®]

HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I love planning my birthday parties! But I end up disappointed every time because my friends don't do the activities I've picked.

Party planner

Birthday party guests should be up for what the host wants to do. But it would be hard to *make* your friends do your activities without spoiling the party mood. Focus your planning talent on other details—food or decorations—and go with the flow on activities, suggesting games when the party energy is low. That way, you should have a good time.



Dear American Girl,

I had a sleepover disaster a few years ago, and my mom *still* won't let me have sleepovers at our house. What can I do?

No Sleepovers

Ask your mom what worries her about sleepovers. Listen carefully, and then ask for a compromise. Could a friend come watch movies and then go home late? And if that goes OK, could you try a sleepover with one trustworthy friend? Working up to an overnight—and following rules your mom sets for hanging out with friends—will help show that you're responsible.



Dear American Girl,

My family lost our cabin in a fire! We had good memories of the place, and everyone is sad. How can I cheer up my family?

suffering

Make a scrapbook of your best cabin memories. Attach a photo to each left-hand page of the book. Then ask your family to fill the right-hand pages with written memories of your cabin. If room is left in the book, fill it with new vacation memories. Losing a beloved cabin is hard, but what matters is the time you spend with family, no matter where you do it.



Dear American Girl,

There's a girl at school who's nice to everyone but me. I've tried to make friends with her, but nothing works.

Why?

It's great that you're trying so hard to be kind and friendly. But you know what? You can't force this girl to be your friend, no matter how hard you try. And that's OK, because you don't have to be friends with everyone. Back off this girl and spend your time with your real friends—the ones who *are* nice to you. Of course, if this girl bullies you, go to a parent or teacher.



MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I need to exercise. But I don't have any time, and even if I did, I wouldn't know what to do.

exercise-less

Having regular practices will help you find time for fitness in your busy schedule, so try taking a class or joining a sports team. But try not to think of exercise as hard work—just being active is what you need in order to be healthy. Get moving by jumping rope, going for a walk, or playing outside with your dog. Have fun!



Dear American Girl,

My mom favors my older sister. She includes my sister in secrets or projects, but she leaves me out. It's not fair.

Please help

Chances are, your mom has no idea how you feel. Talk to her, and instead of telling her that she's not being fair, focus on your own feelings. Say: "When I see how close you and Sophia are, I feel sad and left out. I wish that you and I could be like that." Suggest

some activities for just the two of you, and you should start to feel like a bigger part of your mom's life. Good luck.



Dear American Girl,

Camping is the best! But my problem is my dad. He has a bad back and can't sleep in a tent. That means no camping anymore. I really miss it.

Help!



How about planning a daytime camping trip with your dad? You could make s'mores, hike in the woods, or even set up your tent and read in it for a while. The only difference is that you'll leave in time to sleep at home. Sure, that means no night under the stars. But you also won't have to walk too far to find a restroom!



Dear American Girl,

My sister is going to have to repeat first grade. I'm scared that people will tease her. What do I say if anyone brings it up?

not fair

If someone says something about your sister's schooling, just shrug and say, "Well, everyone agrees that it's going to be great for her, and that's good enough for me." If you don't make it a big deal, most people will drop it. Also, an adult at your school might have some ideas for how your family can answer questions. By supporting your sister, you can help her to feel proud of the girl she is.



even
MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

My dad is in the military, and he just told us that we are moving—to Japan! My parents keep telling me how exciting it will be, but I don't believe them.

I don't want to go

Moving is a big change, and it's normal to be worried. Tell your parents how you're feeling, and ask for help learning all you can about your new home. The more you know about what life is like in Japan, the less nervous you might feel about moving. You're going to be able to try lots of new things, and you'll get to see a part of the world that most girls only read about. If you think about it, that really *is* kind of exciting.



Dear American Girl,

My mom signed me up for summer theater camp, but I'm really nervous about going. I'll have to talk in front of people!

What should I do?

Here's a trick for squashing stage shyness: Repeat to yourself that it's not actually *you* who's talking in



front of people—it's your *character* who's talking. Plus, your character will always know exactly what to say because she's got a script! If that doesn't quiet your fears, then how about this: If you can find the courage to really go for it at this theater camp, you could end up as a girl who used to be shy but who now is OK talking in front of people. Pretty cool, right?



Dear American Girl,

I am a major bookworm. A lot of my books are sad—so sad that I feel as if things are happening to me, not just to the characters.

Confused

It's fun to lose yourself in a story! But it's also important to stay connected to your real life. Try this:

When you read something really sad, turn whatever feeling you have into a thought. Say that you read a story about a baby wolf whose mother dies. The feeling is awful, but your thought might be, *I love my mom. I think I'll go give her a hug.* It also might help to talk to a teacher or parent about how you're feeling to make sure that you're picking books that are right for you.



Advice from You

"Have a friend who's feeling blue? Give her a little bag with ten tiny treats inside, such as little candies, stickers, or toys. A mini surprise might help your friend feel better."

Natalie M.

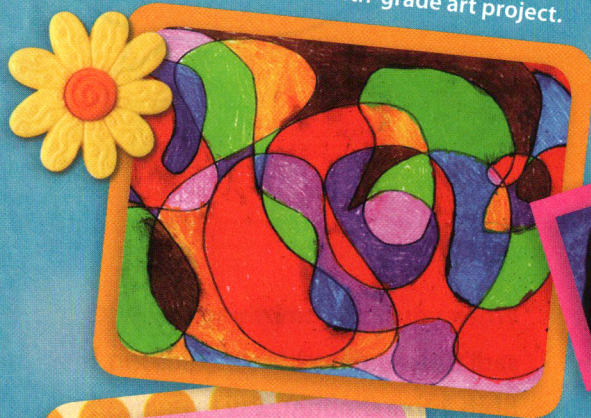
Age 10, California

Need advice? Got advice? Write to:
Help!

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

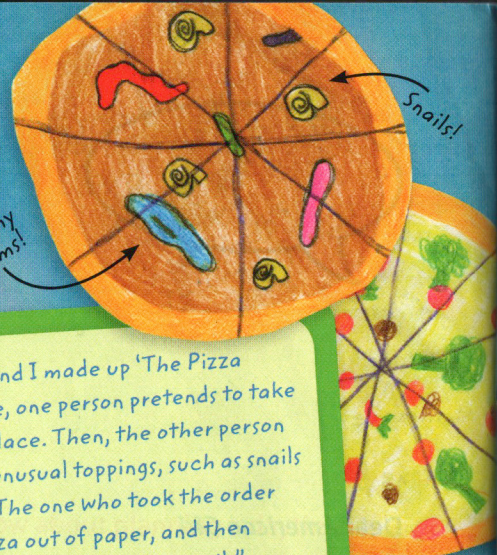
The colorful artwork on the Desk Set in Girls Express was created by Emma M., age 12, of California. She used pastels to make this masterpiece for a fifth-grade art project.



You can express your creativity, too. Turn your initials into works of art at americangirlmagazine.com. Click on "Start the fun."

For You Said It!, Coral C., age 11, of Florida shared a funny game to play with a faraway friend:

"My cousin Brooke and I made up 'The Pizza Game.' On the phone, one person pretends to take an order at a pizza place. Then, the other person orders a pizza with unusual toppings, such as snails and gummy worms. The one who took the order has to make the pizza out of paper, and then she sends it to the other person in the mail."



Coral C.

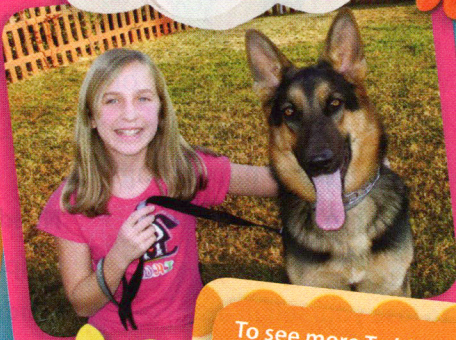


Brooke P.

Behind the Scenes

Flowers are blooming, the grass is green—it's spring in this magazine!

Here they are in real life!



Aleina G., age 11, of South Carolina sent us a drawing of herself and her dog, Major, for our contest.



This dress is "sew" cool!

We couldn't believe our eyes when Blair B., age 13, of Tennessee sent us a photo of herself in a dress she designed—made from American Girl magazine pages!

To see more T-shirts designed by girls like you, go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun."

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fun and games, go to
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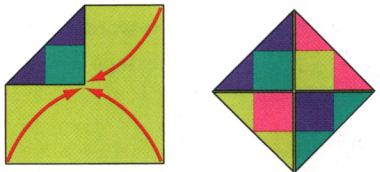
AG's Fun Fortunes

Use these with your friends at your next sleepover. Dream about where you'll live someday, or see what your favorite sleepover snack says about you!

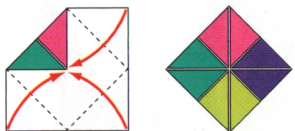
How to Fold a Fun Fortune

1. Cut out one square. Fold and unfold it in half diagonally in both directions to make an X. Place the square number-side down.

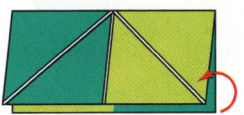
2. Fold each corner point into the center.



3. Flip so that flaps are facedown. Then fold each corner into the center.



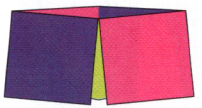
4. Fold in half this way to crease.



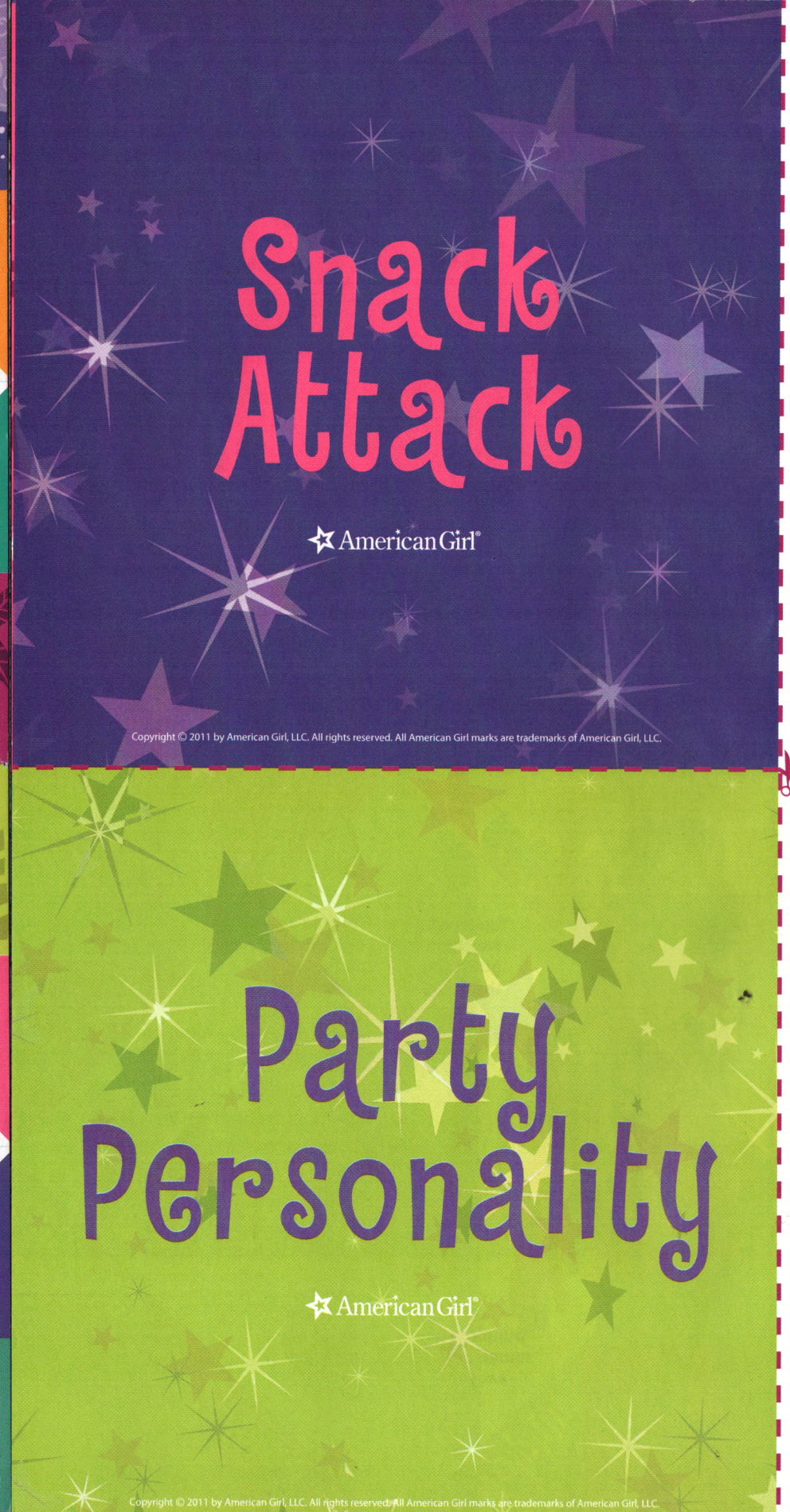
5. Then unfold and fold in half the other way.



6. Stick both thumbs and pointer fingers into the four pockets. Push all the pockets to a point to begin playing.



See other side for how to play!



Dream Home

American Girl

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Movie Future

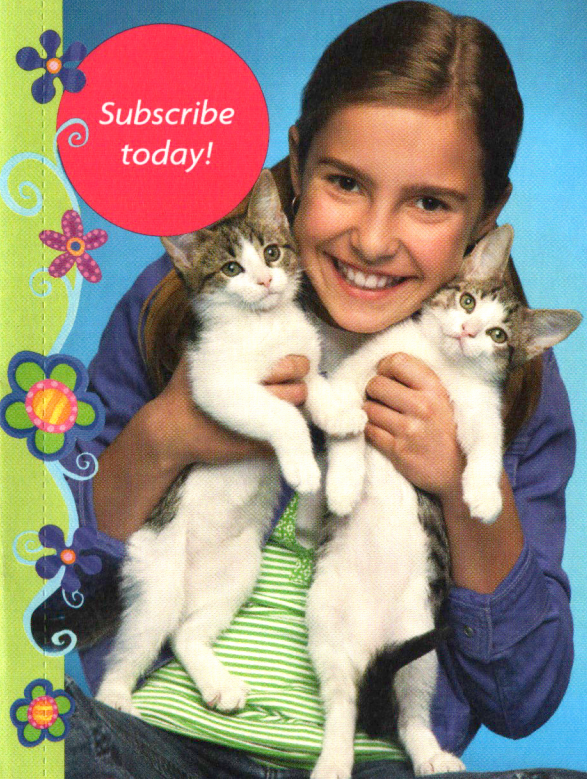
American Girl

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How to Play

1. Insert your pointer fingers and thumbs under the numbered flaps on the Fun Fortune.
2. Ask a friend to choose a number from one of the outside flaps, or choose one yourself. Open and close your fingers that number of times, moving them front to back and then sideways.
3. Have your friend choose one of the words on the inside of the Fun Fortune. Spell out the word, opening and closing your fingers with each letter.
4. Have your friend pick one of the words that shows. Open that flap and read the message beneath. ★





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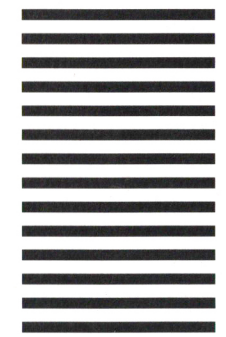
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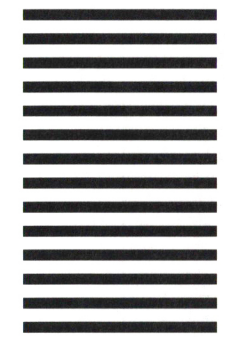
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